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42
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THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI, MASTER OF KUNG FU

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

BEFORE YOU
CAN DEFUSE THAT
TIME BOMB
YOU HAVE TO
DEFEAT **ME!**

AND YOUR MARTIAL ARTS
SKILLS ARE **PITIFUL** COMPARED
TO THE ELECTRONIC POWER OF
SHOCK-WAVE!!

TIK TIK TIK
TIK TIK TIK

CLOCK OF
SHATTERED
TIME!



"Call me Shang-Chi, as my *father* did, when he raised me and molded my mind and my body in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. I learned many things from my father. Since then, I have learned that my father is **Dr. Fu Manchu**, the most insidiously evil man on earth...and that to *honor* him would bring nothing but *dishonor* to the spirit of my *name*.

Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

MASTER OF KUNG FU!

Featuring supporting characters created by SAX ROHMER

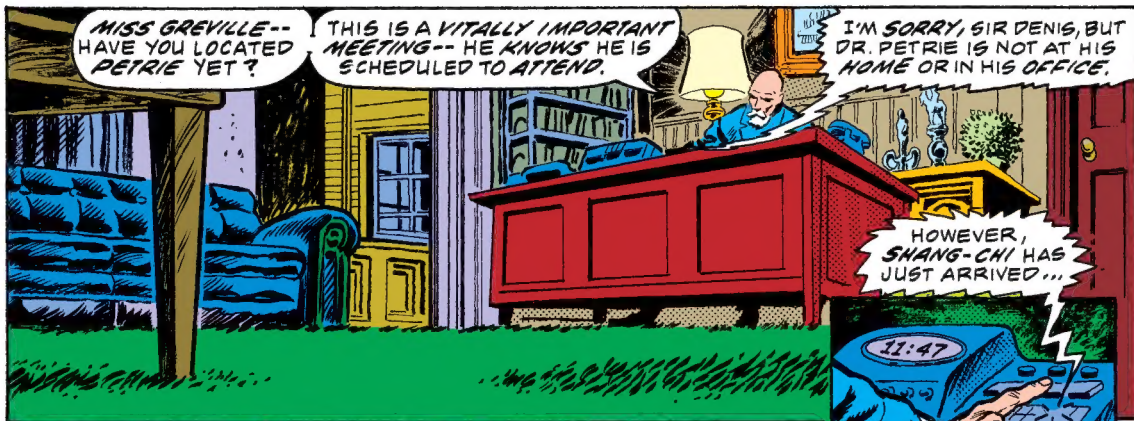
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THE CLOCK of SHATTERED TIME

DOUG MOENCH & PAUL GULACY, STORYTELLERS
TOM SUTTON INKS * DENISE V. WOHL, LETTERS
D. WARFIELD, COLORS * M. WOLFMAN, EDITOR

"THE THOUGHT IS DIFFICULT TO FORM...
THROUGH THE PAIN... AND YET IT
SCREAMS... FROM MY MIND... TO EVERY
POINT OF AND IN MY... BODY..."



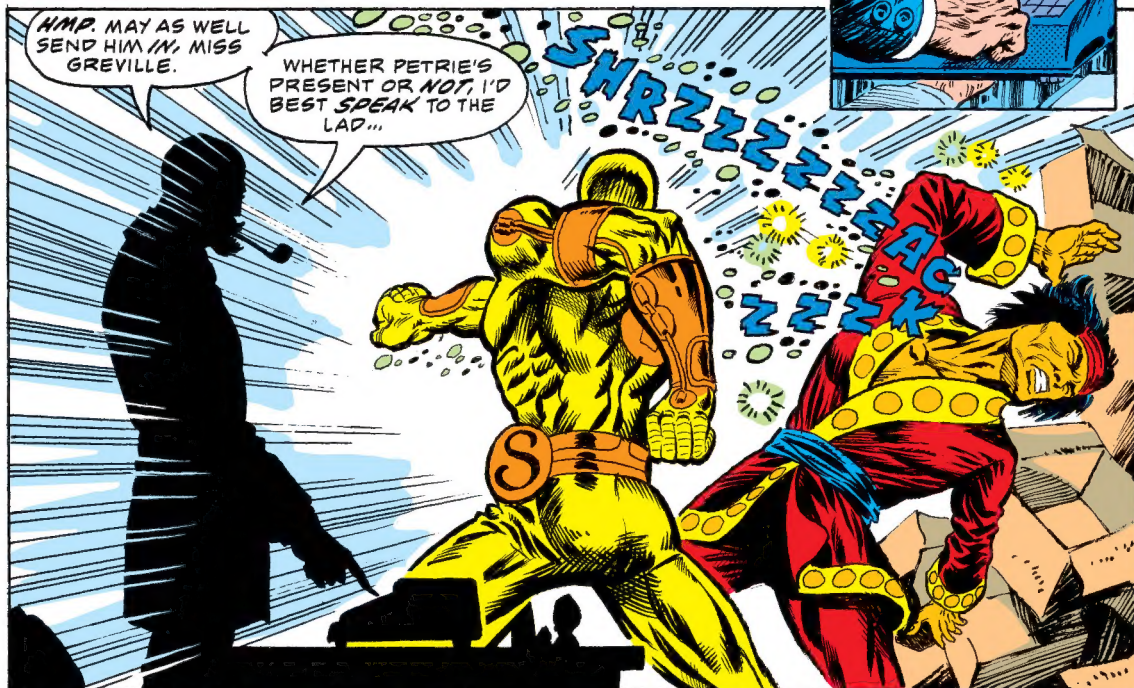


MISS GREVILLE--
HAVE YOU LOCATED
PETRIE YET?

THIS IS A VITALLY IMPORTANT
MEETING-- HE KNOWS HE IS
SCHEDULED TO ATTEND.

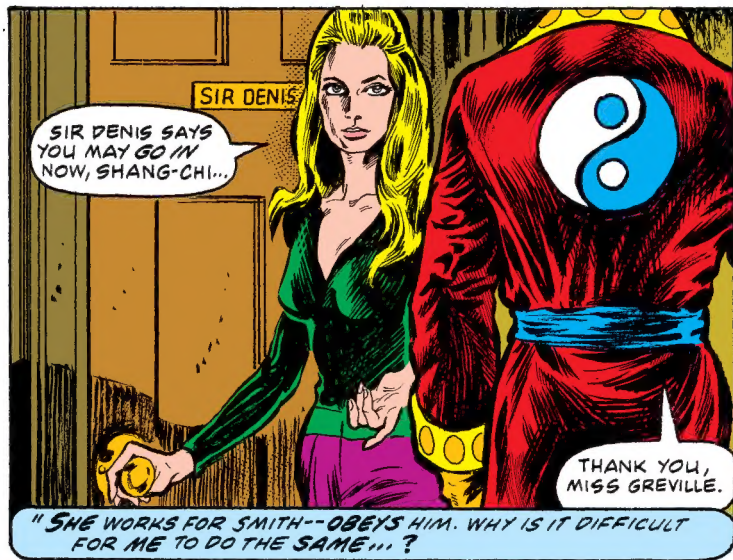
I'M SORRY, SIR DENIS, BUT
DR. PETRIE IS NOT AT HIS
HOME OR IN HIS OFFICE.

HOWEVER,
SHANG-CHI HAS
JUST ARRIVED...



HMP. MAY AS WELL
SEND HIM IN, MISS
GREVILLE.

WHETHER PETRIE'S
PRESENT OR NOT, I'D
BEST SPEAK TO THE
LAD...

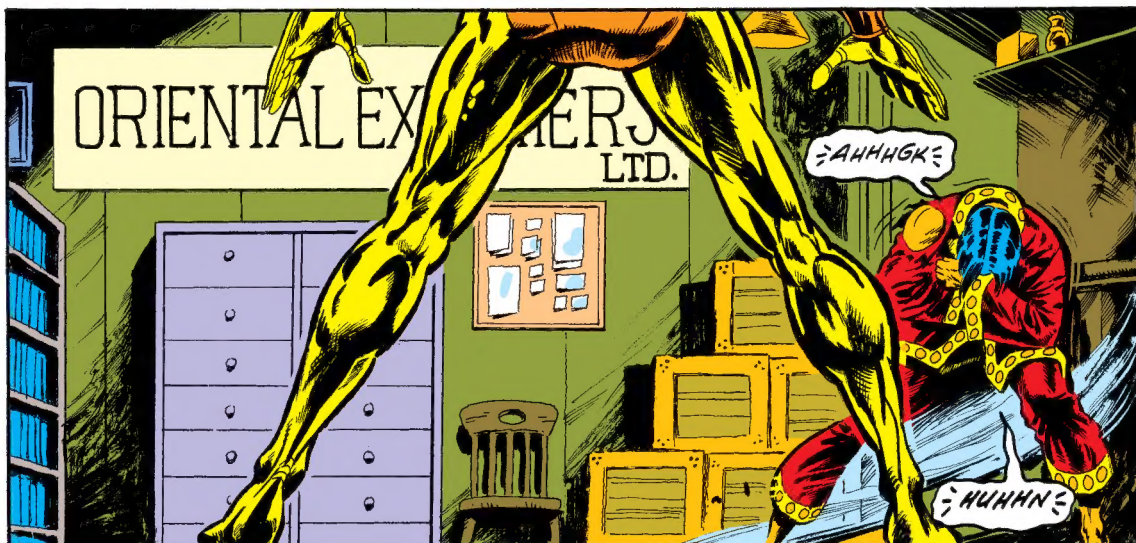
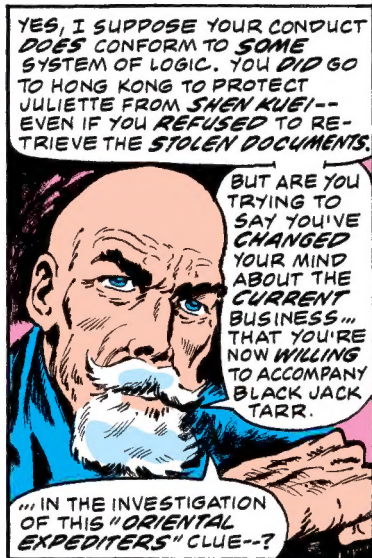
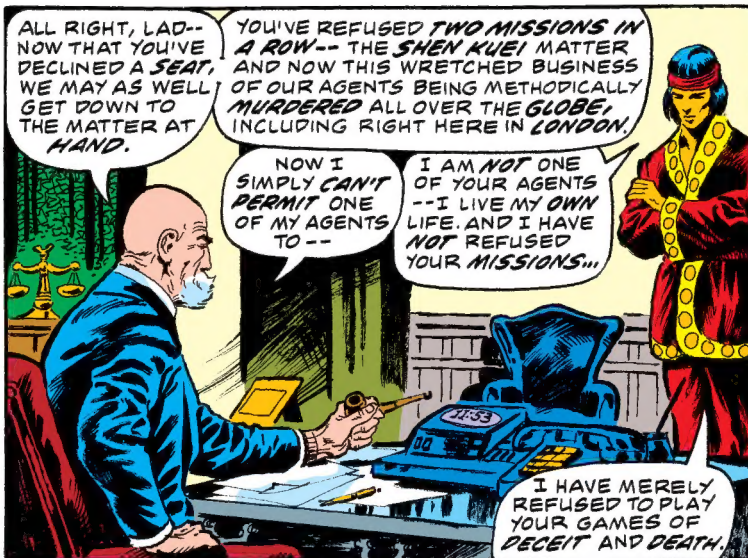


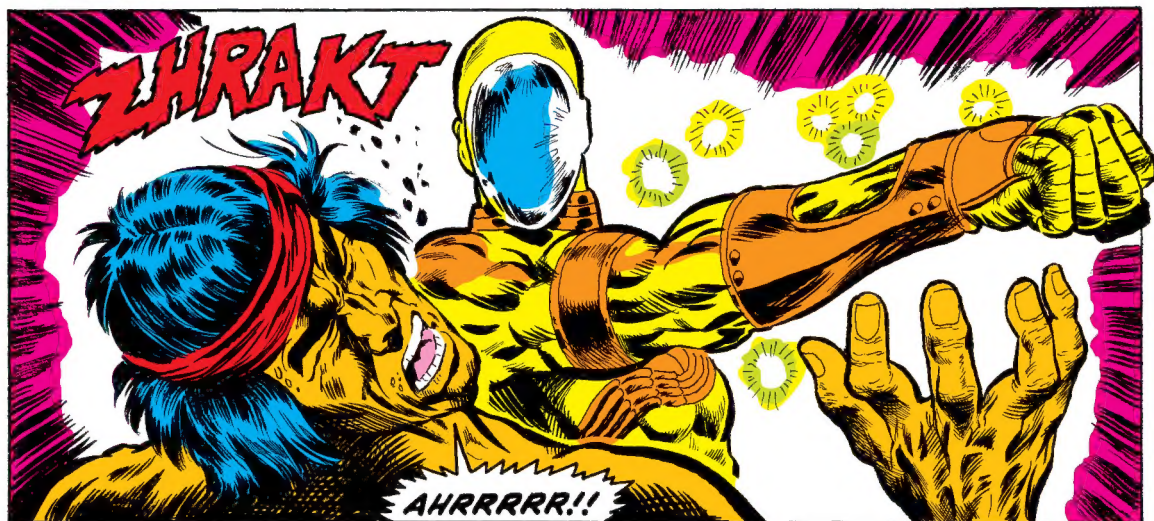
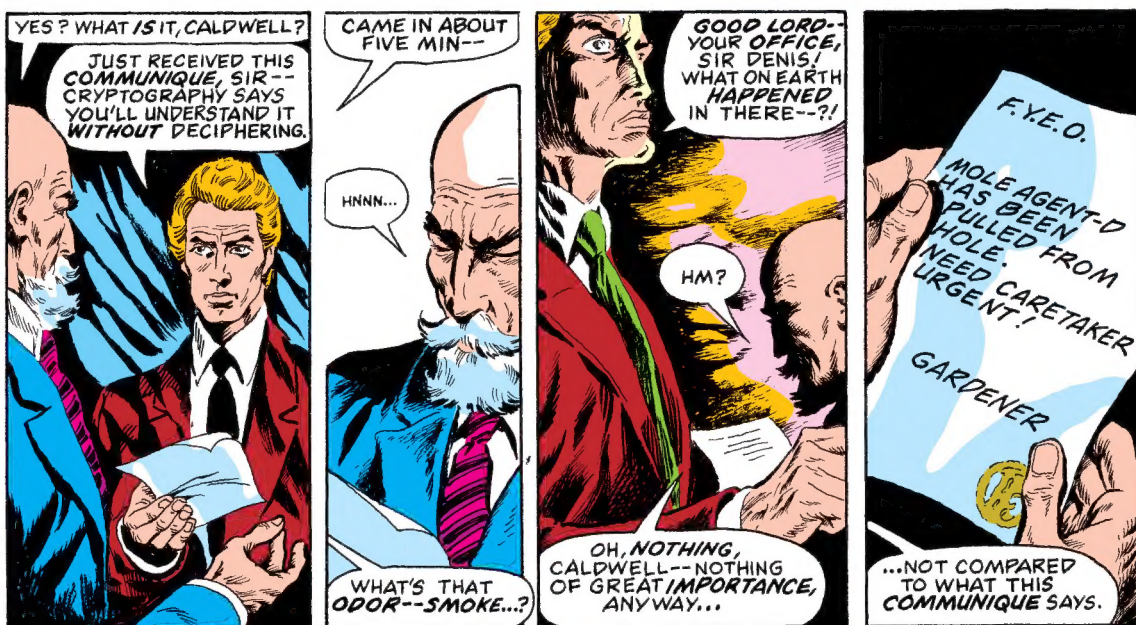
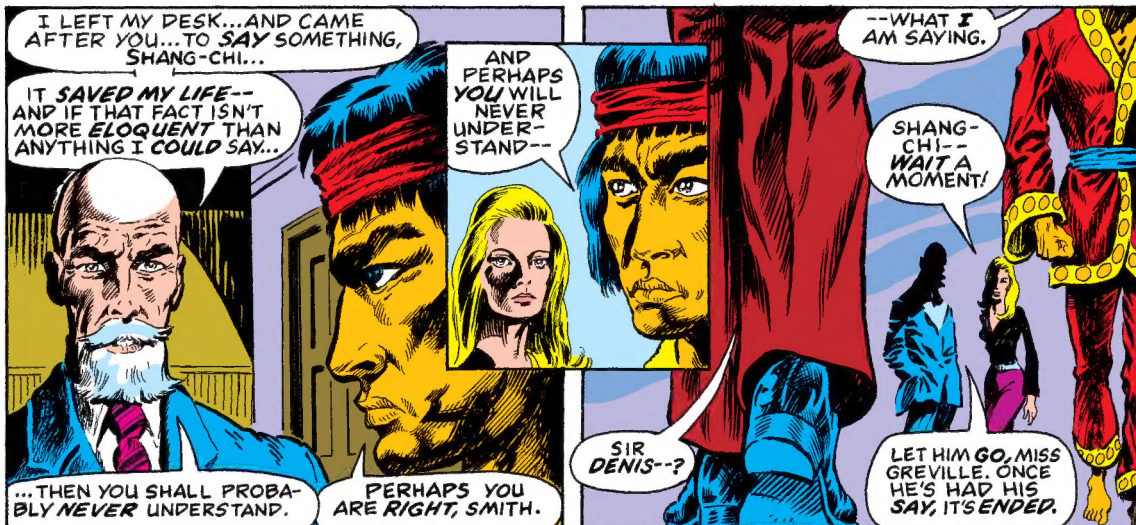
SIR DENIS SAYS
YOU MAY GO IN
NOW, SHANG-CHI...

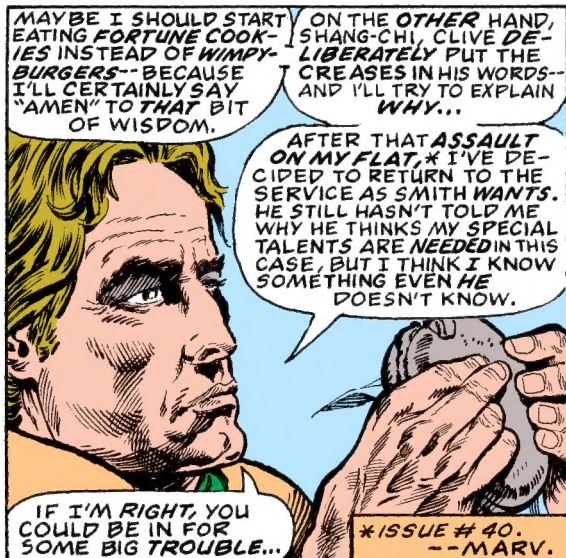
THANK YOU,
MISS GREVILLE.

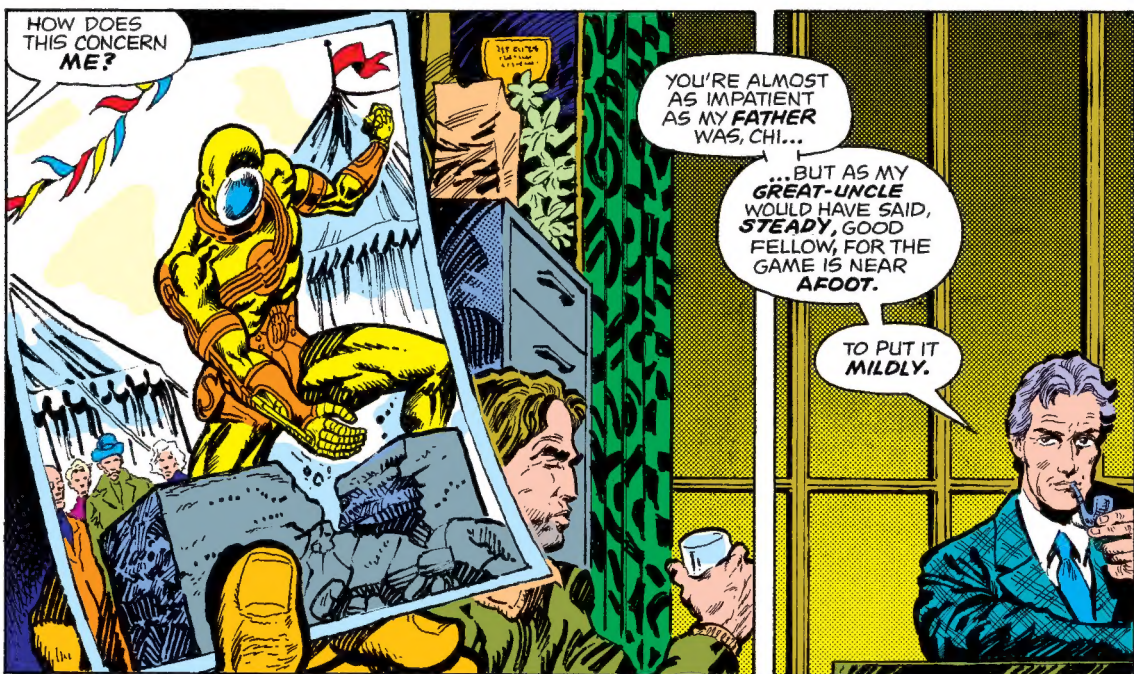
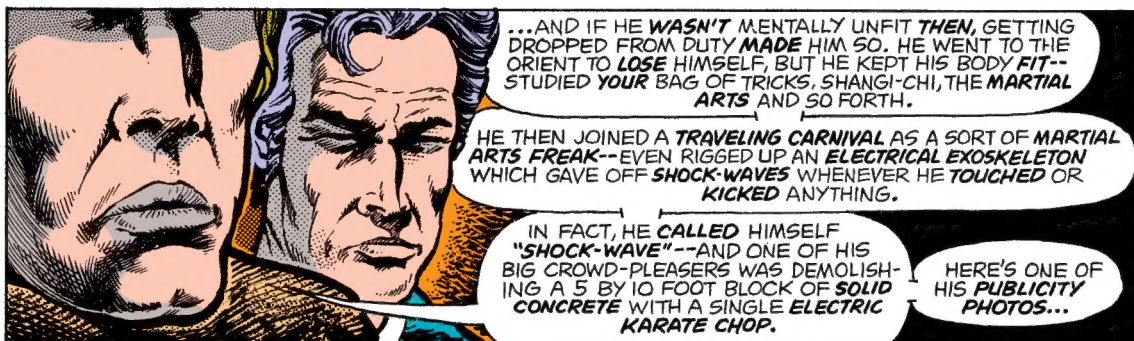
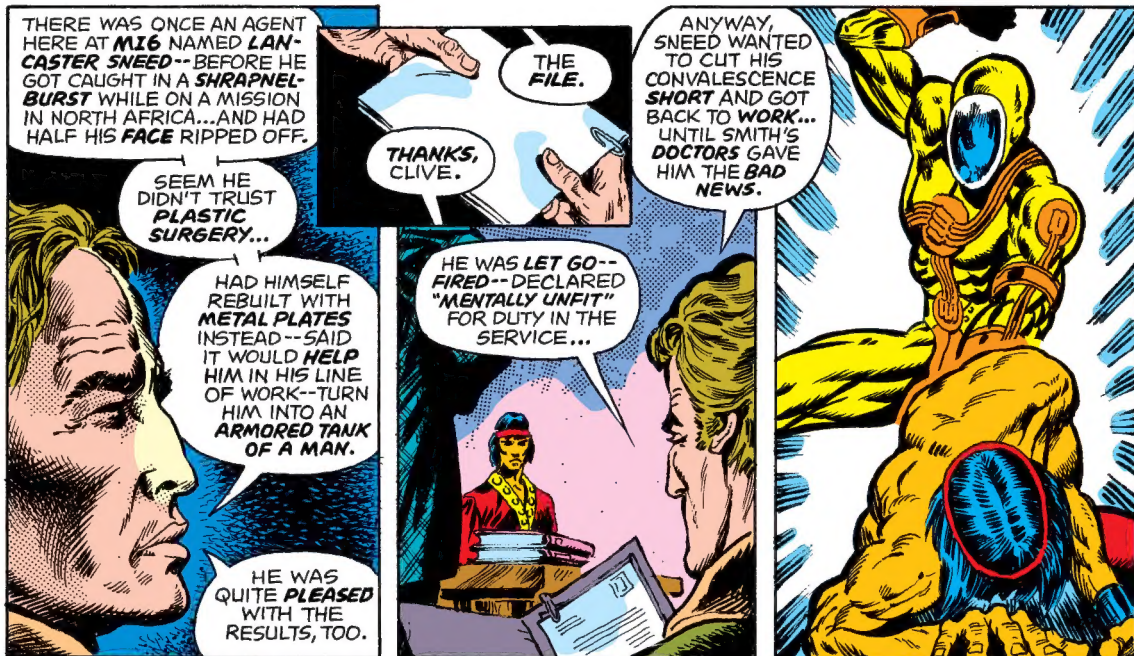


"SHE WORKS FOR SMITH--OBEYS HIM. WHY IS IT DIFFICULT
FOR ME TO DO THE SAME"?







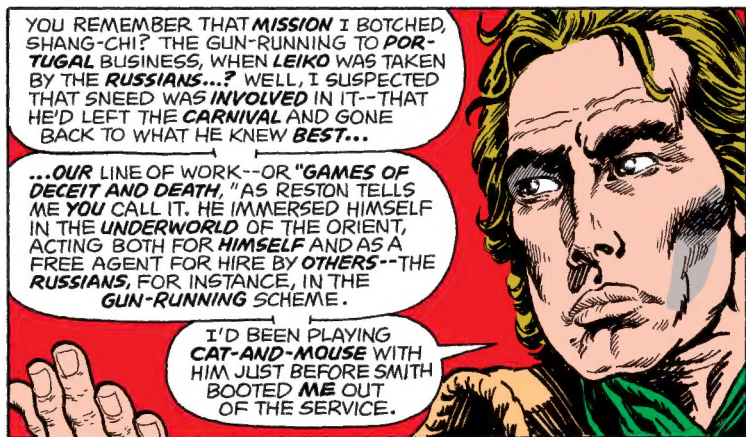




I HAVE NO **TIME** FOR THIS, RESTON. TARR IS **WAITING** FOR ME...

PRECISELY THE **POINT**, CHI...IF YOU'LL **CALM DOWN** AND **LISTEN** TO IT.

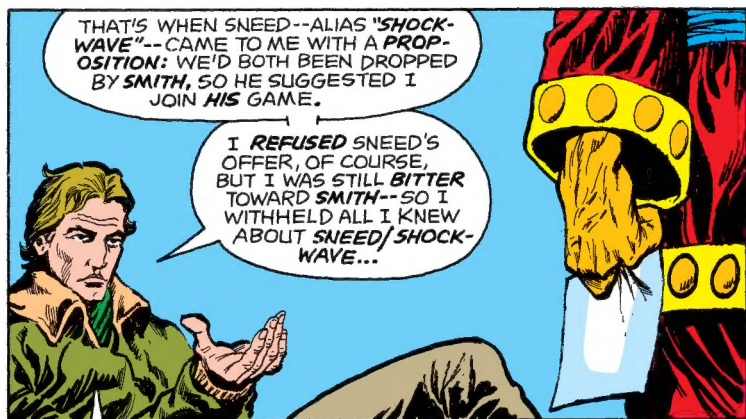
TELL HIM THE **REST**, LARNER.



YOU REMEMBER THAT **MISSION** I BOTCHED, SHANG-CHI? THE GUN-RUNNING TO **POR-TUGAL** BUSINESS, WHEN **LEIKO** WAS TAKEN BY THE **RUSSIANS**...? WELL, I SUSPECTED THAT SNEED WAS **INVOLVED** IN IT--THAT HE'D LEFT THE **CARNIVAL** AND GONE BACK TO WHAT HE KNEW **BEST**...

...OUR LINE OF WORK--OR "**GAMES OF DECEIT AND DEATH**," AS RESTON TELLS ME YOU CALL IT. HE IMMERSSED HIMSELF IN THE **UNDERWORLD** OF THE ORIENT, ACTING BOTH FOR **HIMSELF** AND AS A FREE AGENT FOR HIRE BY **OTHERS**--THE **RUSSIANS**, FOR INSTANCE, IN THE **GUN-RUNNING** SCHEME.

I'D BEEN PLAYING **CAT-AND-MOUSE** WITH HIM JUST BEFORE SMITH BOOTED ME OUT OF THE SERVICE.



THAT'S WHEN SNEED--ALIAS "**SHOCK-WAVE**"--CAME TO ME WITH A **PROP-OSITION**: WE'D BOTH BEEN DROPPED BY SMITH, SO HE SUGGESTED I JOIN **HIS** GAME.

I **REFUSED** SNEED'S OFFER, OF COURSE, BUT I WAS STILL **BITTER** TOWARD SMITH--SO I WITHHELD ALL I KNEW ABOUT **SNEED/SHOCK-WAVE**...



...AND FOR **THAT** REASON, HE'S STILL **FREE**...

I STILL DO NOT SEE HOW THIS **CONCERNS** ME...



YOU'RE ABOUT TO TAKE OFF WITH TARR FOR **ORIENTAL EXPEDITERS**, AREN'T YOU? WELL, WHEN SHOCK-WAVE POSED HIS **DEAL** TO ME, HE CONFIDED THAT THE **FRONT** FOR HIS OPERATIONS WAS A LEGITIMATE FIRM FOR THE IMPORTING AND EXPORTING OF **FAR EASTERN ART OBJECTS**...

...A FIRM CALLED "**ORIENTAL EXPEDITERS, LIMITED**."



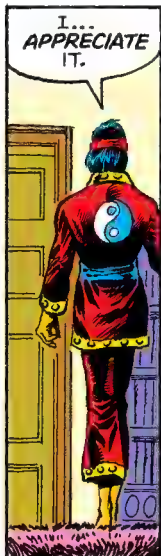
WHY HAVE YOU NOT TOLD THIS TO **SMITH**?

WE **CAN'T** TELL HIM, CHI...



JUST **BELIEVE** THAT--BECAUSE WE CAN'T TELL YOU **WHY**.

BUT WE **DID** WANT YOU TO KNOW WHAT YOU MIGHT BE GOING **UP AGAINST**...



I...
APPRECIATE
IT.



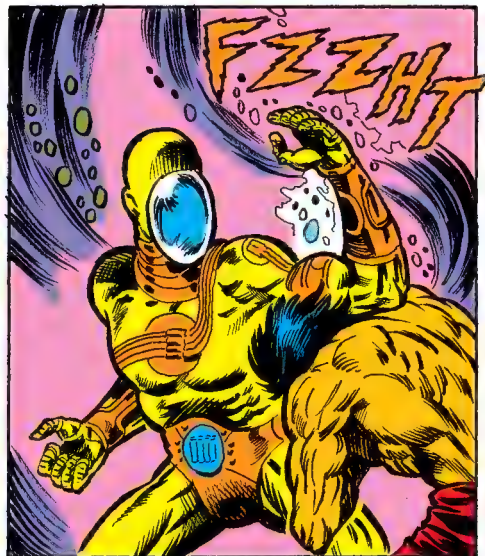
HE'S GETTING TO BE
A REAL **SOUR-PUSS**
THESE DAYS, LARNER--
BUT WE DID OUR
BEST TO WARN HIM...

NOW LET'S GET BACK
TO WORK, IF THE DEMO-
LITIONS DEPARTMENT--



--WILL QUIT SHAK-
ING THE **PLASTER**
OFF THE WALLS
WITH THEIR BLOODY
TESTS.

IT WAS **NOT**
A TEST.

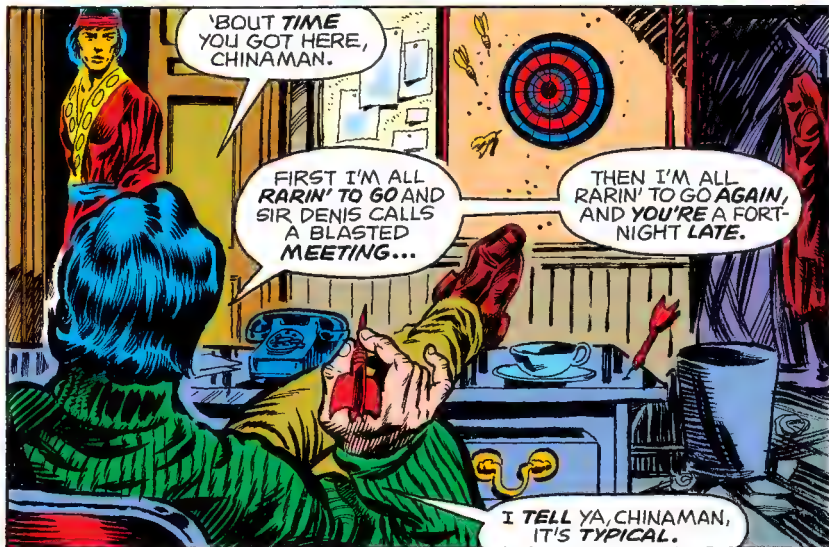


"I REACH TARR'S OFFICE,
THINKING OF LEIKO..."

BLACK JACK TA

"...AND OF
HER
DEATH
MISSION'..."

"...INVOLVING SOMEONE
CALLED 'MOLE AGENT-D'..."

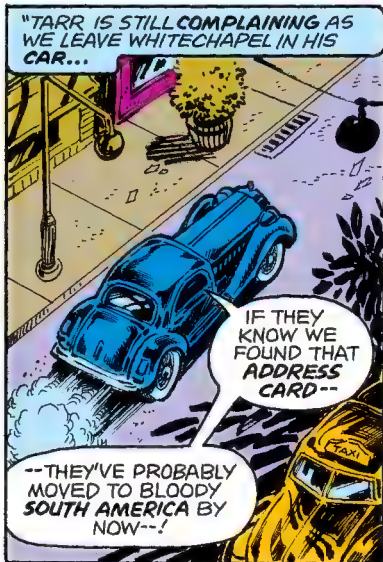


'BOUT TIME
YOU GOT HERE,
CHINAMAN.

FIRST I'M ALL
RARIN' TO GO AND
SIR DENIS CALLS
A BLASTED
MEETING...

THEN I'M ALL
RARIN' TO GO AGAIN,
AND YOU'RE A FORT-
NIGHT LATE.

I TELL YA, CHINAMAN,
IT'S TYPICAL.



"TARR IS STILL COMPLAINING AS
WE LEAVE WHITECHAPEL IN HIS
CAR..."

IF THEY
KNOW WE
FOUND THAT
ADDRESS
CARD--

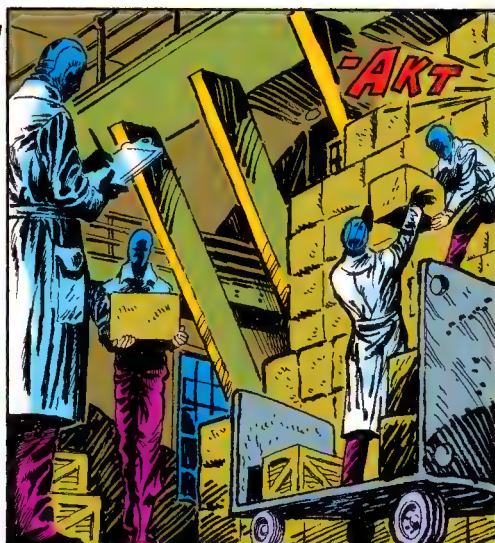
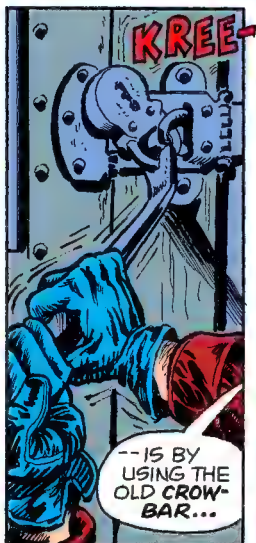
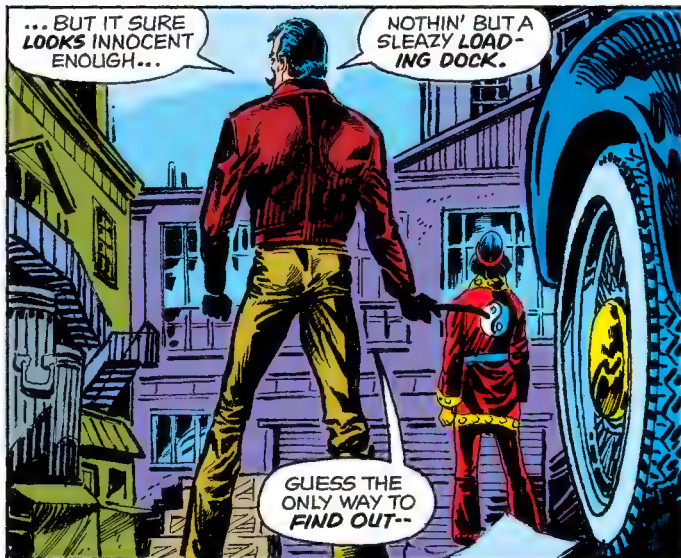
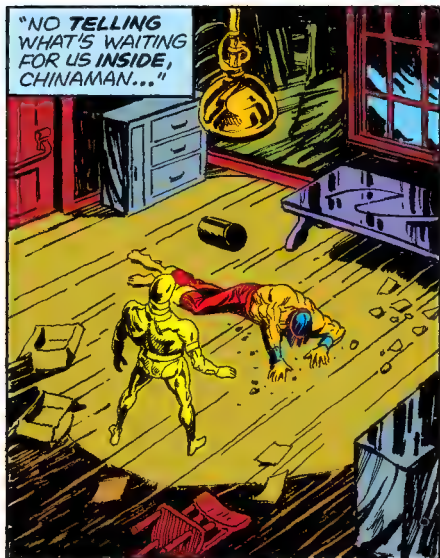
--THEY'VE PROBABLY
MOVED TO BLOODY
SOUTH AMERICA BY
NOW--!

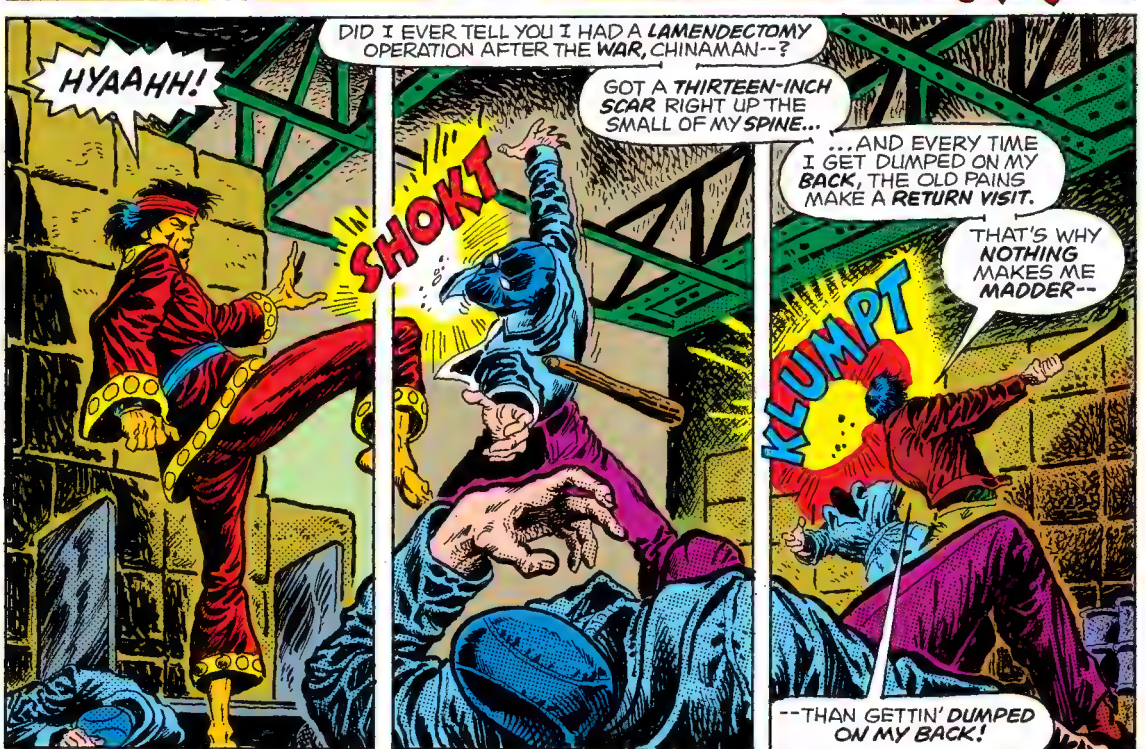
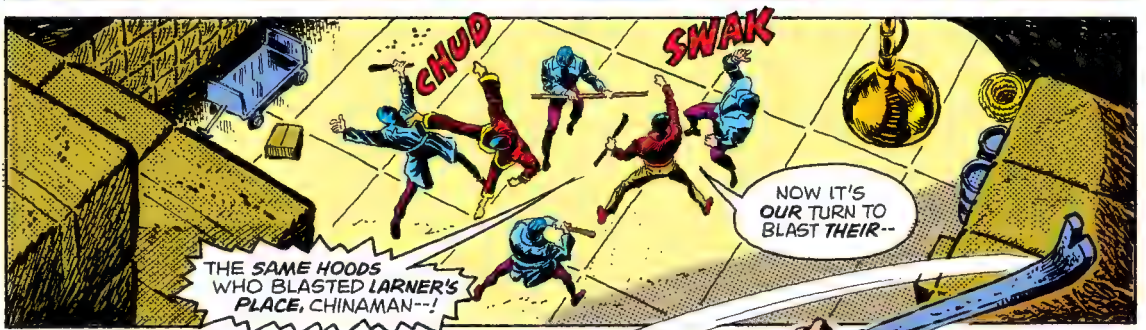


"...AND STILL, AS
WE REACH OUR
DESTINATION.

WELL, THERE IT IS--AND THEY
COULDN'T BE MORE OBVIOUS IF
THEY TOOK OUT SPOTS ON
THE **B.B.C.**

DARK INSIDE--BETTER
GO AROUND BACK.







I TOLD YOU WE WERE GONNA FIGHT, LITTLE MAN!

NOW DO YOU BELIEVE ME?



"THE FIGHT IS ENDED. TARR'S CROWBAR HAS STOPPED THE LAST OF THEM..."

QUIET, TARR...!

I HEAR VOICES-- BEYOND THIS WALL...

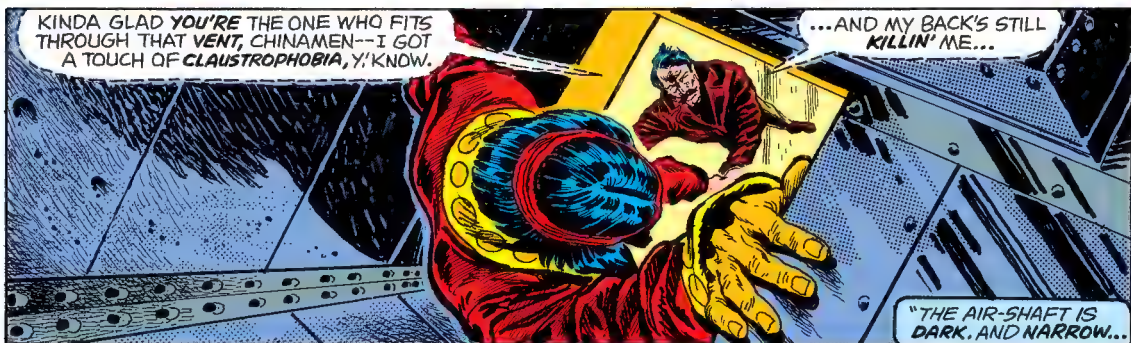
"...BUT I CANNOT HEAR WHAT IS BEING SAID..."



DON'T JUST STAND THERE TALKING TO HIM, SHOCK-WAVE!

HE'S DOWN! HE'S BEATEN! NOW FINISH HIM OFF!

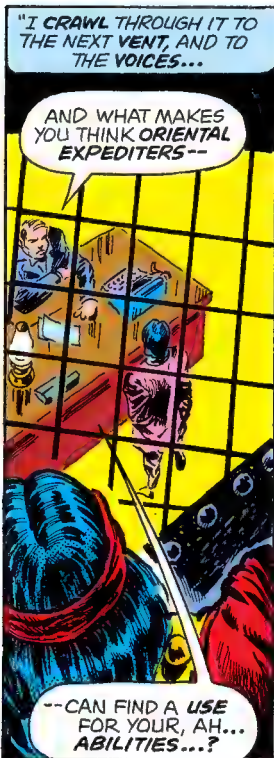
WE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE-- HURRY UP AND KILL HIM!



KINDA GLAD YOU'RE THE ONE WHO FITS THROUGH THAT VENT, CHINAMEN-- I GOT A TOUCH OF CLAUSTROPHOBIA, Y'KNOW.

...AND MY BACK'S STILL KILLIN' ME...

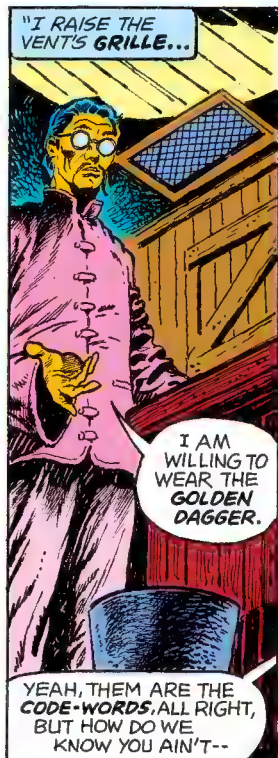
"THE AIR-SHAFT IS DARK, AND NARROW..."



"I CRAWL THROUGH IT TO THE NEXT VENT, AND TO THE VOICES..."

AND WHAT MAKES YOU THINK ORIENTAL EXPEDITERS--

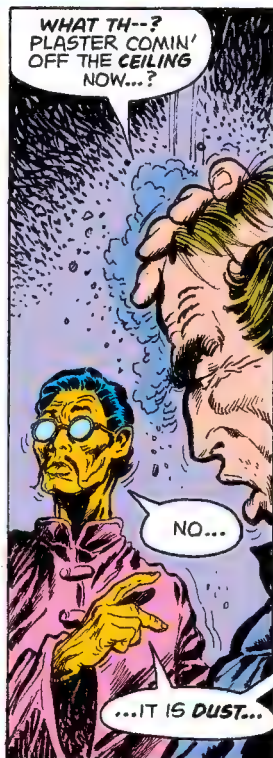
--CAN FIND A USE FOR YOUR, AH... ABILITIES...?



"I RAISE THE VENT'S GRILLE..."

I AM WILLING TO WEAR THE GOLDEN DAGGER.

YEAH, THEM ARE THE CODE-WORDS, ALL RIGHT, BUT HOW DO WE KNOW YOU AIN'T--



WHAT TH--? PLASTER COMIN' OFF THE CEILING NOW...?

NO...

...IT IS DUST...



...AND SOMETHING FAR WORSE, I FEAR.

"I DROP."



WHY HAVE YOU TRIED TO KILL TARR AND ME?

WHO IN THE--?

SHOCK-WAVE!!
GET IN HERE--
HURRY!!



A FEW MORE ZAPS OF ELECTRICITY AND HE'LL BE FINISHED, ALL RIGHT...

WHAT'S THE RUSH, SKOLNIK?



"SHOCK-WAVE--? THEN LARNER'S FEARS WERE CORRECT."

"BEHIND ME-- A SOUND..."

YEAH, SKOLNIK--!

I'M COMIN'!

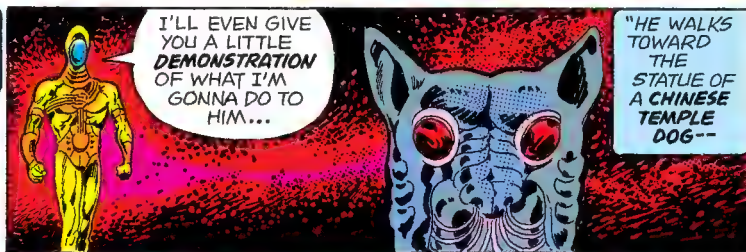
"THE DOOR OPENS--

"--AND MY FIRST SIGHT OF HIM, AS HE ENTERS THE OFFICE, IS CHILLING. HE IS FAR MORE FORMIDABLE THAN HIS PHOTOGRAPH HAD SUGGESTED..."



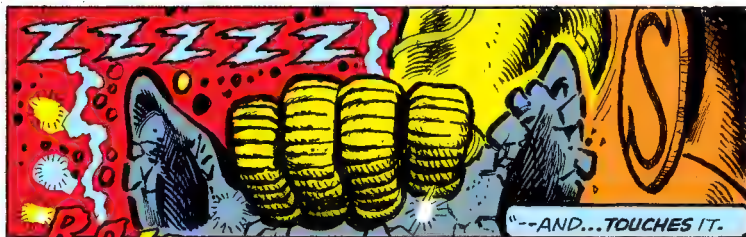
TROUBLE, SKOLNIK?

DON'T WORRY --I'LL MAKE FRIED MINCEMEAT OUT OF 'IM...



I'LL EVEN GIVE YOU A LITTLE DEMONSTRATION OF WHAT I'M GONNA DO TO HIM...

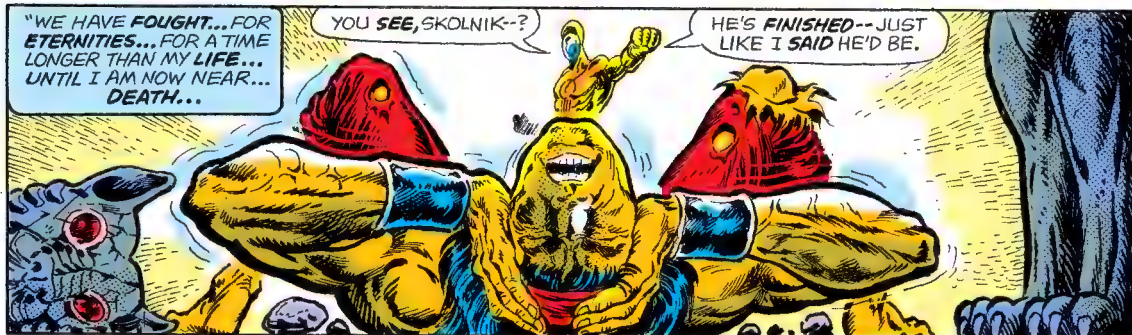
"HE WALKS TOWARD THE STATUE OF A CHINESE TEMPLE DOG--



--AND...TOUCHES IT.



NOW, LITTLE MAN-- WE'RE GONNA FIGHT!



"WE HAVE FOUGHT...FOR ETERNITIES...FOR A TIME LONGER THAN MY LIFE... UNTIL I AM NOW NEAR... DEATH..."

YOU SEE, SKOLNIK--?

HE'S FINISHED-- JUST LIKE I SAID HE'D BE.

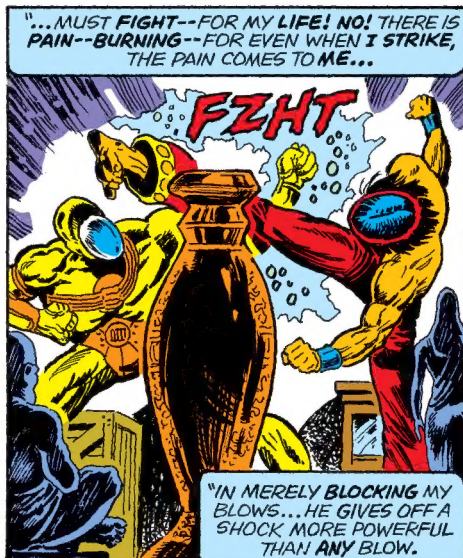


BUT JUST FOR **GOOD LUCK**, I'LL GIVE 'IM ONE MORE **ELECTROSHOCK KICK!**

"MY BODY--**BURNED AND NUMB**--**CRASHES** THROUGH A **DOOR...**

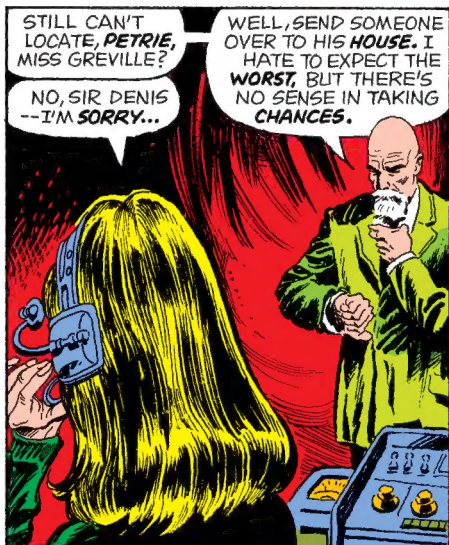


"HEAD **SWIRLING...** DULL, NUMB, SKIN **TINGLING**, BUT MUST **GET UP...**



"...MUST **FIGHT--**FOR MY **LIFE!** NO! THERE IS **PAIN--BURNING--**FOR EVEN WHEN I **STRIKE**, THE PAIN COMES TO ME..."

"IN MERELY **BLOCKING** MY **BLOWS...** HE GIVES OFF A **SHOCK** MORE **POWERFUL** THAN **ANY BLOW.**



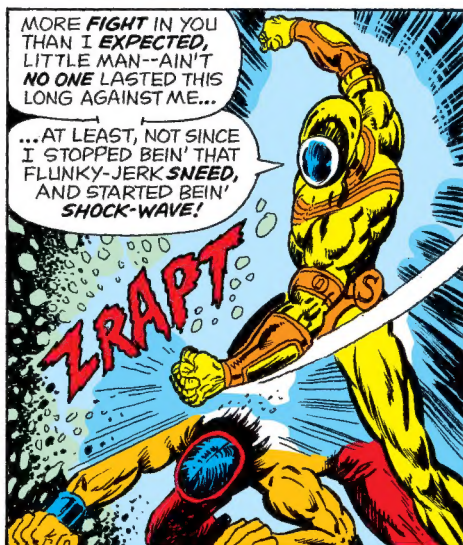
STILL CAN'T **LOCATE, PETRIE**, MISS **GREVILLE?**

NO, SIR **DENIS**--I'M **SORRY...**

WELL, SEND SOMEONE OVER TO HIS **HOUSE**. I HATE TO **EXPECT** THE **WORST**, BUT THERE'S NO **SENSE** IN **TAKING CHANCES.**



AND **BUZZ RESTON**. TELL HIM TO **BRING IARNER** AND **MEET** ME BY THE **CAR.**



MORE **FIGHT** IN YOU THAN I **EXPECTED**, LITTLE MAN--AIN'T **NO ONE** LASTED THIS LONG AGAINST ME...

...AT LEAST, NOT SINCE I STOPPED BEIN' THAT **FLUNKY-JERK SNEED**, AND STARTED BEIN' **SHOCK-WAVE!**



BETTER START BEIN' **SCARED, BOZO...**

...SO **SCARED** THAT YOU CAN'T EVEN **MOVE.**



I...



BLOODY FAST WEIRDO--HE ALMOST **FLEW** THROUGH THAT **DOORWAY!**

YOU **ALL RIGHT**, CHINAMAN?

YOU DON'T **LOOK** IT.

I... **THINK...** SO...

"TARR PURSUES SHOCK-WAVE...AS I...STAGGER...OUTSIDE..."

THERE HE IS!

STOP THE CAR HERE, CLIVE.

BUT WHAT THE DEVIL'S WRONG WITH HIM? HE LOOKS FAIRLY DEAD ON HIS FEET.

YEH--WISH LARNER WOULD HAVE COME WITH...

NO--CAN'T YOU SEE IT'S OVER, CLIVE? GO AND HELP HIM!

SHANG-CHI--WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU, LAD?! ARE THOSE CUTS --OR BURNS?

"RESTON RUSHES FORWARD... SEARCHING MY FACE..."

"HE AND LARNER DO NOT WANT SMITH TO KNOW ABOUT SHOCK-WAVE..."

"...AND THIS, HE FEARS MY... REPLY..."

THERE ARE...CUTS, SMITH...BUT NOT ...SERIOUS...

GLAD TO HEAR THAT, LAD, BECAUSE AFTER WE GET YOU OVER TO THE HOSPITAL FOR TREATMENT, I'M GOING TO ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING ELSE FOR ME.

LEIKO HAS SENT A COMMUNIQUE FROM SWITZERLAND. HER CONTACT --AGENT-D--HAS BEEN DISCOVERED BY THE ENEMY. THEY NOW KNOW THAT AGENT-D IS ONE OF OUR COUNTER-AGENTS...

...AND BOTH LEIKO AND AGENT-D NEED PROTECTION.

I WANT YOU TO PROVIDE THAT PROTECTION.

SMITH...

...YOU ASK...

...TOO... MUCH...

GOOD LORD! PICK HIM UP, CLIVE! GET HIM OVER TO CHARING CROSS--IMMEDIATELY!

CRAZY WEIRDO GOT AWAY... WHOEVER HE WAS.

HEY, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHINAMAN?

IS HE ALL RIGHT, RESTON--?

HAVE TO TAKE HIM TO THE HOSPITAL TO FIND OUT, TARR. RIGHT NOW, HE'S OUT OF IT.

I DON'T LIKE THIS, SIR DENIS--I WAS BEGINNIN' TO THINK THE CHINAMAN WAS A SUPERMAN...

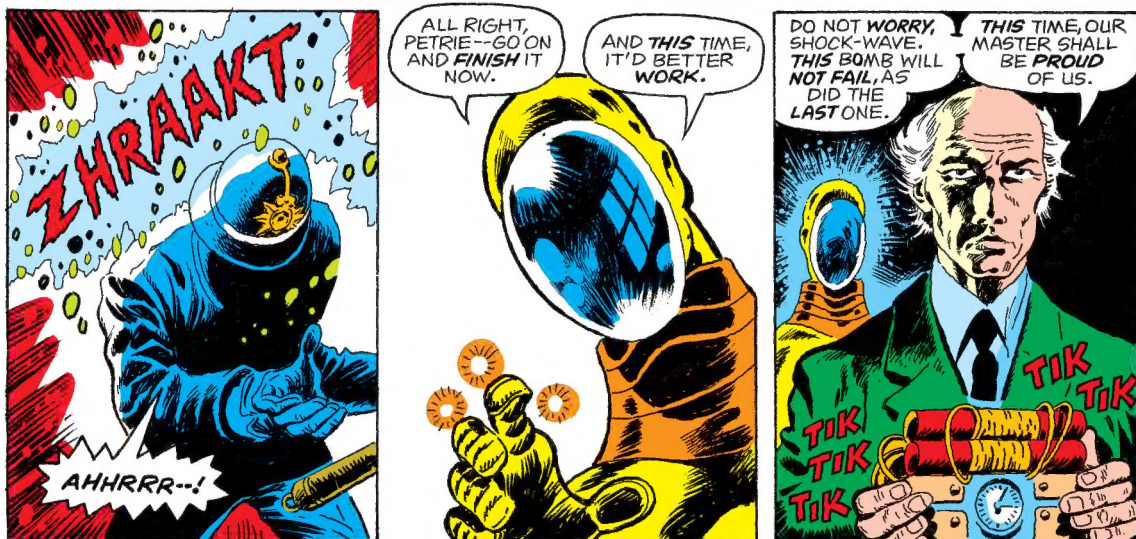
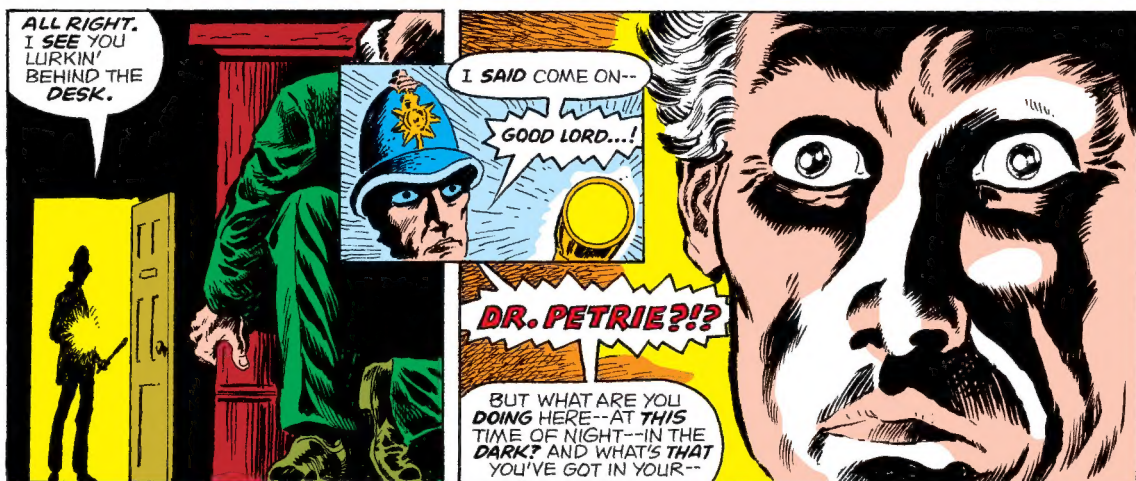
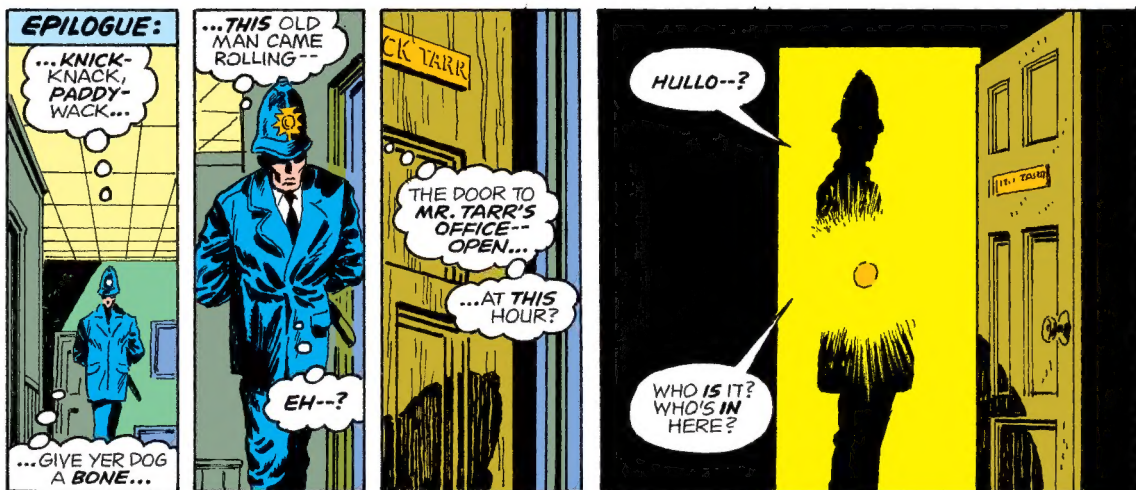
HE NEVER GOT HURT BEFORE.

THINGS ARE GETTING JUST A LITTLE TOO ROUGH AROUND HERE-- AND I DON'T LIKE IT.

YES, BLACK JACK, AND MATTERS CAN ONLY GET WORSE. EVEN IF SHANG-CHI SHOULD... UH, PASS ON... IT WILL BE A WASTED SACRIFICE. WE'RE NO CLOSER TO LEARNING THE IDENTITY OF THE MOLE WHICH INFESTS THE SERVICE...

...AND UNTIL THAT MOLE IS FERRETTED OUT, EVEN MORE AGENTS WILL LOSE THEIR LIVES BEFORE THIS IS OVER.

YEAH. WONDER WHO'LL BE NEXT...



SUFFICIENTLY SHOCKED, PEOPLE? OR ARE YOU HUNGRY FOR MORE--? YEAH, WE KINDA THOUGHT SO, AND IN THAT CASE BE HERE--**NEXT ISSUE**, WHEN WE JOURNEY TO SWITZERLAND TO LEARN THE IDENTITY OF THE OTHER MOLE (A.K.A. AGENT-D) IN THE SUPER-THRILLER CALLED--

A FLASH OF PURPLE SPARKS!

MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

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A mixed bag of comments ranging over any number of past stories and topics, several announcements and sneaky peeks into the future of the SHANG-CHI strip, and a dose of sobriety leavened with humor is the stuff of this month's letter column, troops. And since we're all partners-in-wonder (sorry, Harlan), what are we waiting for...?

Dear Honorable Staff:

GIANT-SIZE MASTER OF KUNG FU #4 had to be one of the best Chang-Shee—I mean *Shang-Chi*—stories ever written. The character of Rufus T. Hackstaber rates with Howard the Duck. I implore you to let Rufus return in future stories. Better still, give him his own magazine!! At *least* give him a few pages as a back-up feature in one of the giant-size mags. Please...!

Compliments on Keith Pollard's artwork, too; it fully matched Doug Moench's excellent story.

Kevin & Kirk Scanlon
30554 Troon Pl.
Hayward, CA 94544

Good news, Kevin & Kirk! While the newly revived giant-size version of the SHANG-CHI strip (called MASTER OF KUNG FU ANNUAL this go-round) sports a single, epic-length story and no back-up features, the redoubtable Rufus T. Hackstaber is nevertheless pratfalling his irreverent way back into your sweaty-palmed little hearts. (*Huh?*) Even now, Devil-May-Care Doug Moench and Klobberin' Keith Pollard are soft at work producing an all-new full-length Hackstaber master-fleece—entitled "A Night at the 1001 Nights" and guest-starring none other than Rufus' cousin twice removed by berth (he slept two bunks up from Rufus), the notorious Quigley J. Warmflash. And puns will never be the same!

What's that? You wanna know what *is* gonna be in the newly revived giant-size version of SHANG-CHI, since Hackstaber *ain't* gonna appear therein...? Shucks, the answer to that is easy; MASTER OF KUNG FU ANNUAL is chuggin' your way with a modern-myth masterpiece called "The Fortress of S'Ahra-Sharn"—cooked up by the very same Doug and Keith, and...are you ready?...featuring the first-ever cataclysmic confrontation between Shang-Chi and *Iron Fist*! (At times like this we're tempted to say "Nuff said!"—but we won't...)

Dear Doug,

I've read MASTER OF KUNG FU #33 and #34—and hate you for making me wait to read #35. This is an utterly fantastic story—I love it! One thing, though: I'm not really averse to Shang-Chi (how do you pronounce that?) having a romance, but *please*...not with Leiko. You and Paul portrayed poor Clive so real and human in his love for Leiko, that I find I really want the two of them to get back together. It would be tragic if he lost her forever—especially to a friend like Shang-Chi. You wouldn't be so cruel, would you?

Ann Nichols
P.O. Box 125
Williamsport, MD 21795

We'll never tell, Ann—but we *will* say that there are some mighty big surprises in store for the Reston/Leiko/Shang-Chi triangle...as evidenced by the last few issues. Check out, in particular, pages 7 and 10 in issue #39.

As for the pronunciation of Shang-Chi's name, nothing could be more simple; "Shang" rhymes with "sang," and "Chi" rhymes with "free."

Dear Friends,

If MASTER OF KUNG FU #29 was indicative of the direction you plan to take with Shang-Chi, then I like it. *Like* it? I *loved* it! You see, I have always admired Shang-Chi for very specific reasons, and have always been disappointed when he did not live up to my vision of him—getting trapped by his father's hordes in cliché situations, etc.

First, I like his character, his loneliness, his inability to fit into the world of his father's vision or the world of modern society. Most of all, I like his search to find a morality which does not originate in either of these two opposing—but similar—worlds. He may ally himself with Smith, Petrie, Reston, and Black Jack—but he can never share their philosophy or morality.

Shang-Chi is a moralist because he cares about right and wrong—but he does not always recognize which is which. He is confused by "games I do not understand." If he had the answers, he would be preachy...a saint, maybe, but not a particularly interesting character. His "rising and advancing" is and should be a search, not a complacent philosophy.

The mode of Shang-Chi's narration is also a strong attraction for me, and is at its best in #29. Terse, logical, and poetic—a beautiful combination, Doug, and one of which you can be proud.

In essence, the best things about this best-of-comics are its cinematic action (Paul Gulacy truly has no peer), its exotic locales, its interplay of characters, and its villains.

"Its *villains*?" you ask on cue. Yes! One thing I happen to like very much indeed is a classy villain—the kind who wears expensive clothes and probably a monocle, who lives in beautiful foreign houses with bodyguards, who wants power at any cost, and who invariably hates children. You know the type: narrow eyes with an evil glint and a good sneer when they condescend to use it. Velcro was a prime example, but Fu Manchu is the prototype — setting the tone for the best of Shang-Chi's antagonists. And because Shang-Chi's enemies do not result from personal hatred, as I see it, the dominant theme is that of Shang-Chi, alone and armed only with integrity and humility, waging war on the power-hungry, battling the cruelty and pride and tyranny of those who covet—and use—power for its own sake. Shang-Chi fights only for freedom of person and mind. As it *should* be.

Two other things I like: One is Clive Reston, and the other is Paul Gulacy. Paul is the best man to come *near* MOKF, and his art is a joy to behold every time. Do you get the feeling I liked #29?

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Indeed we do, Elizabeth, and we love every minute of the feeling! Thanks, sincerely, for your most eloquent and articulate letter; we're the ones who should be grateful...for readers like you.

Unfortunately, we don't have room for our Special Announcement of the Issue—but we will hint that it concerns an unprecedented, upcoming six-part magnum opus starring a fella with the initials Fu Manchu. It's still a ways off, mind you, but plans are taking shape at a feverish pace. And before Bill Wu jumps on us, we hasten to add that Fu will be presented in a somewhat different light this time. More on this in next issue's lettercol...

Be good.